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### **What is the meaning of tolerance in the modern world?**

Dear boy who stands everyday beside the third door in the bus,

I feel your pain; I feel it deep inside my heart. It burns, it's killing me little by little, and that's because I know you feel like you don't fit in this world. You sometimes wonder why you're not the same as the others. It is so hard to live a normal life; they give you models, models which are not right. They manipulate you to believe that some things are right and some things are wrong, and if you don't agree with them, they delicately remove you.

I watch everyone at school; I know their pains, too. That girl who passed by me one day was crying inside; several people have rejected her just because she was overweight. They don't know how beautiful her heart is. Or that boy who always sits alone at lunch. They call him gay and mock him every time they have the chance to. Yes, he isn't straight, but is that a subject of mockery? Again, the only thing they see the outside; they would probably never find what that boy found, and that is love.

The Chinese girl, the Indian boy, the Turkish twins, the girl in a wheelchair, the nerds, the Hebrews, you, me. We walk on the corridors beside the walls, we feel safer this way; we dip our faces into some book when someone is looking at us, we avoid eye contact with anyone, afraid of their glances, we don't talk, we stutter, we feel inferior, we are afraid to express our opinions, we are afraid to be ourselves. They look at us and say "They're shy." We're not shy, we're just afraid of being rejected.

If they gave us the chance to be ourselves, we would be much better than we are now, I'm telling you, keep your head up high, have the guts to say what you think, at least, you can try. Even if it costs you something, you may gather their respect. I believe in you, I know you can do whatever you wish to do. I know you don't believe me, I don't want you to; I just want you to read what I wrote, I put a piece of my soul in there, I hope it will help you call up and do what your heart tells you. I see nothing wrong with having a redhead student council president. Go there and show them that gingers have solus<sup>1</sup>! You're a person and you have rights. I'm cheering for you and wishing to you to at least gather a little more self-esteem. Words can't hurt you so keep going and don't listen to their insults.

With love,

The orphan girl who always sits on the last seat in the bus.

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<sup>1</sup> Ginger is a word given to naturally red haired people and there is a popular joke saying that gingers don't have souls.